

Random Skits

by . . .

Ned Hale.

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Edwin H. Hale





Random Skits.

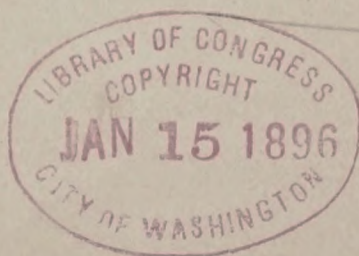
by

Ned Hale.

 *Edwin M. Hale*
Illustrated by
Arthur DeWitt Brooks.


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1896
.. The Brooks Company ..
Printers and Binders,
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Dedicated to his highly esteemed
and much beloved instructor
Prof. N. M. Anderson.



Note.



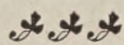
THE following short sketches were written by Edwin W. Hale, during his connection with the University School, of Cleveland, O.

Soon after entering the school, he commenced writing for the Record, a paper edited and published by the students, and eventually he became one of its editors.

Without his knowledge his father collected these contributions to the Record written from time to time, and arranged to have them published in book form under the title of Random Skits. Mr. Arthur D. Brooks, who is a member of the University School, and is also connected with the Record and a personal friend of Ned, was taken into the secret and he kindly agreed to illustrate the work.

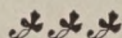
The plan was carried out and herewith is submitted the result.

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A Queer Ghost Story.



T was on the night of the twenty-third of March, 189—, that the mysterious event I am about to relate occurred. All the boarders of the Bachelors' Quarters where I was staying had gone to some entertainment, and I was left alone in the house. I was sitting in my room, clad in dressing-gown and slippers, gazing into a large fire that crackled and sputtered in the open grate (for the weather was very chilly, and a good fire was a nice thing to have around), when I was awakened from my lethargy by the violent ringing of the front door-bell.

Who could the person be that would come to the house on such a night as this, and especially at such a time, I wondered, glancing at the clock which pointed to half-past eleven. Surely it could be none of the boarders, for they all had latch keys, and as to anybody making a call at that time, why, the very idea was ridiculous. I sat thinking about this for some time, but was finally aroused by the renewed ringing of the bell and knocking on the door. Then recollecting that I was the only person in the house, I

arose from my chair and went down to open the door. As I turned the key I heard the impatient stamping of feet on the threshold, and when I threw the door open, in stalked a huge creature muffled from head to foot in a large overcoat, on which glistened a few flakes of snow which was at that time falling. From the folds of the large garment a hollow voice demanded, "Why did you keep me waiting there in the cold?" I thought this a very cool remark to make to a person whom he had just routed from a nice, warm room, but I apologized to him for my delay, and as if satisfied with the apology, he strode to the hat-rack, and turning his back to me, threw off his overcoat, hung it up, whirled about, and looked directly at me.

I had not until this time seen his face, and the start I experienced on looking at it I shall never forget. His eyes, which were sunk deep in his head, glowed like two living coals, and seemed to penetrate into the gloom of the ill-lighted hallway. They were shaded by coarse, shaggy eyebrows. A prominent nose, small, thin mouth, square jaw, and sunken cheeks, completed his appearance. But the thing that made my mysterious visitor the object of dread he immediately became to me, was the utter pallor of his face, not a single touch of color setting off his features. It was such a face as one sees on the dead.



He stood looking at me for some time, then striding forward he extended his hand, saying, in a sepulchral voice, "Mr. ———, I believe." "Yes," I answered, "but you have the advantage of me." At this he thrust his hand into his pocket, took out a card case, extracted a card and handed it to me. As I reached forward to take it my hand encountered his; it was so cold and clammy that the perspiration burst forth at every pore. I took the card and holding it to the light, read, "A. Ghost."

I ushered him into the parlor, and pushing forward a chair, sat down opposite. "Well, Mr. Ghost," I said, "what can I do for you?" "Nothing," he answered, "aside from listening to my story." I told him to go ahead with his story, but to cut it short, as it was way after my usual hour for retiring. He glanced at the clock, which pointed to 11:40 and muttered, "Twenty minutes. Well, I think I can do it." So settling himself, he began:

"You already know by my card who I am, and now I must tell you where I live: it is not very far from here, in fact only across the road." I shuddered as I thought that all the land across the road in front of our house was occupied by a cemetery.

"Well," he continued, "now as to the object of my call, which I confess is a rather late one. You well know that in olden times the followers

of my profession used to haunt people, that is, wander around in all God-forsaken places, and at all unseemly hours, and scare the unfortunate people who might venture near them out of their wits. Or, perhaps, they selected a certain house in which to wander about, and used to tramp through it, arrayed in nothing but a sheet, with chains clanking and mysterious moanings going on. Now this is a very uncomfortable custom, not only to the ghost, who has to lug his chains about with him, and nearly freeze because of his scanty clothing, but also to his victims who, having had no introduction, know not who or what their visitors are. So I have chosen a different course to pursue in my wanderings, namely, that of arising from my bed, or grave, as you might call it, and haunting people, not out in the cold, but in the warmth and glow of their own firesides. So I will tell you that I have called at this unseemly hour for the express purpose of haunting you. You are the first person I have ever tried this scheme on, so I do not know how it will work."

My first thought on hearing this strange speech was that my visitor was a maniac, but looking at him more closely I saw that he must be right, for I could see right through him, in fact the back of the chair in which he was sitting was as plainly visible as the front part. "Well," I said, "now that you are here you had

better begin to haunt." At this he scratched his head, looked around the room with a puzzled air, and showed by many other actions that he had not provided for that part of the proceeding. Finally he laughed a troubled kind of a laugh and said, "Well, I must confess that I do not know very well how to do that." Seeing a way out of the difficulty I said, "What time do you have to return to your gra—— bed?" "At twelve o'clock," he answered. Well, thought I, if I can keep him interested in something else for about ten minutes, till it is twelve o'clock, may be he won't have time to do any haunting.

Turning to him I said, "Don't you think that the best way to haunt me would be to do it over a bottle of Madeira and a box of Havanas?" At this his eyes sparkled, and he said, "Well, I don't know but what that might be a good plan. Suppose you get the stuff and we'll try it."

So I bundled off to the pantry, leaving my ghostly visitor sitting with his feet on the table in evident comfort. I soon returned with the wine and cigars, and setting a glass down on the table, poured him out some liquor and took some myself. He drained his glass to the dregs at the first quaff, and then lit a cigar.



I was very curious to note what became of the liquor after he had swallowed it. I could distinctly see the red wine slipping down his throat and floating around inside of him. Gradually it began to go to his head, and after he had drunk a few more glasses his whole head was nothing but a large red ball. This did not seem to affect him, however, and he soon removed his feet from the table and rising from his chair said, "Well, I think I'll try the haunting business now." I told him to go ahead, as he had only five minutes to do it in.

At this he started, glanced at the clock, drank another glass of wine, grabbed me by the wrists and commenced to dance around the room, knocked down chairs and tables, slamming me into everything we came across, and all the time singing a peculiar kind of song that sounded very like a funeral dirge. After about two minutes of this kind of business, he stopped as suddenly as he had started, and slammed me down in a chair, breathless. After I had somewhat recovered my breath I told him I thought that a peculiar way of haunting people. He smiled and drank another glass of wine.

What with the wine I had drunk and the tobacco smoke with which the room was by this time filled, my head began to swim, and the objects in the room to assume grotesque shapes. Finally I heard my ghostly visitor say, "There's

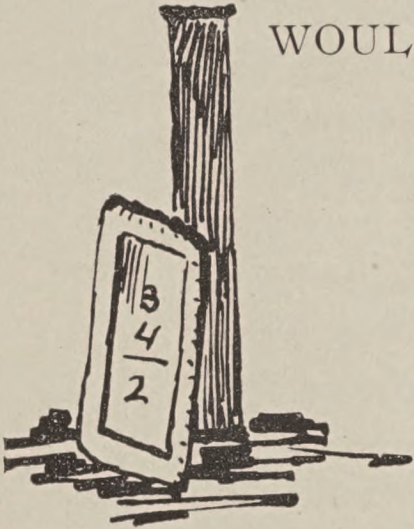
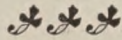
only one minute more," and then he began to dance around the room, at the same time yelling at the top of his voice. His red head began to grow larger and his form seemed to fill the room, when I heard the clock strike twelve.

At this moment there was a loud explosion, a crash of breaking glass, and I found myself lying on the floor looking up into the faces of some of my companions, who had just come home from the ball.

"Well, old man," said one, "you seem to have been having a high old time while we were away." All around me were broken bottles, and tightly clenched in my right hand was a large decanter full of red wine. Dazed and nearly senseless I arose to my feet and looked around the room. Chairs and tables were lying upturned on the floor, pieces of bric-a-brac were scattered all over the room, and a general scene of confusion met my eye. So my ghostly visitor was a dream, and my midnight dance a somnambulistic dance with a wine bottle.



A Young Mathematician.



WOULD like to acquaint the reader with my young brother Willie—Bill for short. He is just seven years old, and the pride (and terror) of the household. At present he is staying home from school because of a cough which bears a fancied resemblance to the whooping-cough. But be that as it may, he is at home, and that is enough.

The other day, after rampaging the house from cellar to garret, he decided to pay a visit to a young friend of his next door, by the name of Joe, and help him amuse himself. He staid till supper-time and got home about half an hour after he was telephoned for, which is fast time for him. When he got home the family were all eating supper.

After having washed his hands and face, he bounded into the dining-room and sat down at the table. He was very quiet for a little while, which, by the way, is very unusual, and then looking up he said: "Mamma, Joe gave me a couple of pieces of candy, over there." Now

candy is something he has been forbidden to eat, as it is not good for whooping-cough.

"You didn't eat any of it, did you?" asked his mother.

"Only three pieces," was the reply.

"How many pieces did you have left after eating three out of the couple?" facetiously remarked one of the family.

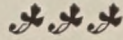
"Four," answered the young mathematician.

"Well," said his mother smiling, "I guess you had better give me those until after supper."

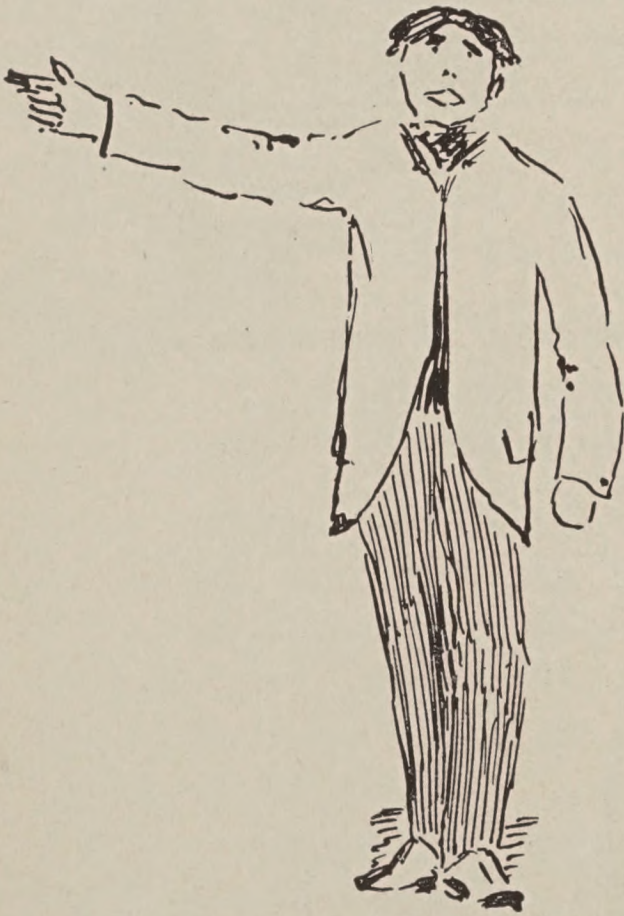
"Oh," said Bill, looking up innocently, "I ate them up coming home."



Called Back.



IT was during one of the recent political campaigns in Cleveland that this little event took



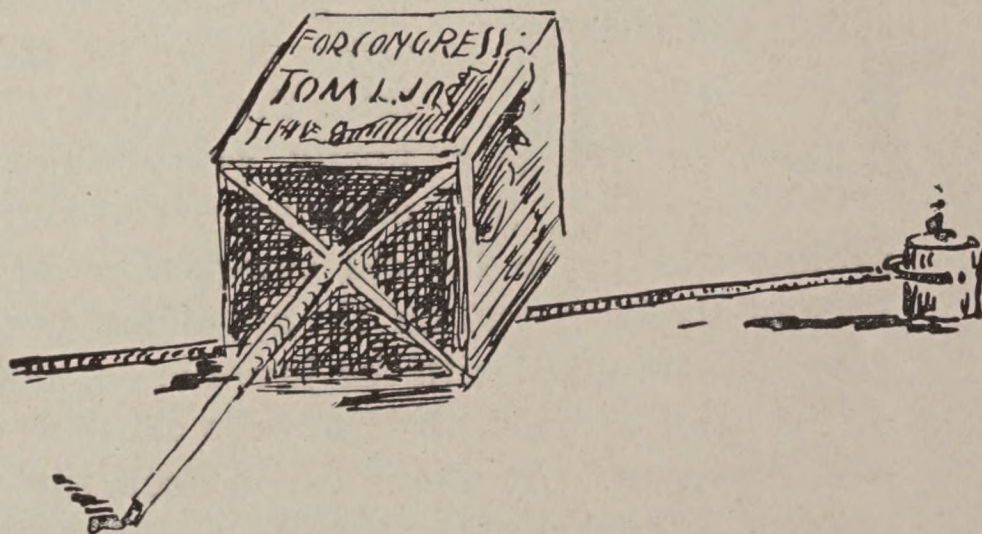
place. There was quite a hot debate going on concerning the future of certain American industries under the new Tariff Bill, and finally a rather small man, who gave one the opinion that he ought to be home tending the baby instead of addressing a political meeting, arose to give the people a few pointers on the way to carry on the government. He started off in a very timid manner at the very

back of the stage
to urge the anima-

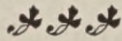
tion of American manufactories. But gradually, as he became warmed up, he began to get excited and step by step came out toward

the edge of the platform, waving his arms and pouring forth eloquence by the yard.

"We *must* go forward!" he was saying. "Do you consider it patriotic to allow the pauper labor of Europe to obtain the prestige over the best manufactures of our glorious country? No! A thousand times no!! We must push on, advance, go forward!" All this time he had been working his way out toward the end of the stage, and was now standing on the very edge of the platform. He was just raising his foot to accompany another burst of patriotic eloquence, and most likely another admonition to "go forward," when a voice with a decided Hibernian accent cried out from the back of the room, "Shure, an' if yez goes forward anither shtip, yez'll fall aff the roostrum."



The Tournament.



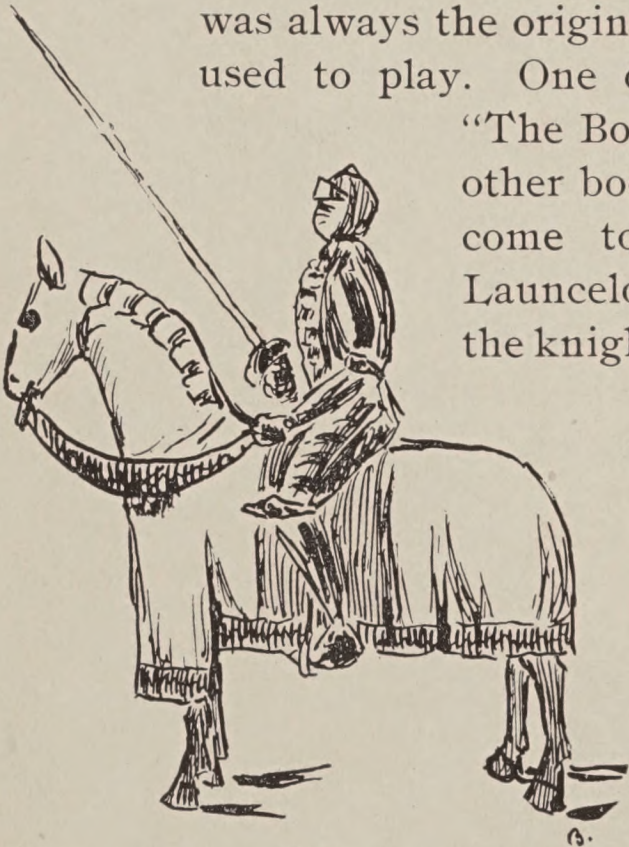
A TRUE STORY.

GEORGE and Henry were the names of a couple of boys who lived in the little town of Chardon. George was a little the older, and was always the originator of all the pranks they used to play. One day he had been reading

"The Boys' King Arthur," or some other book of chivalry, and having come to the place where "Sir Launcelot" gallantly trounced all the knights who were brave enough

to bear a lance against him in a certain tourney, he decided that it would be a great thing to get up a tournament himself. So he let Henry into the scheme, and finally everything was arranged. The tourney

ground was to be the old cow-pasture at the back of the barn, and on the appointed day the fence was thronged with the juvenile population of the neighborhood who had been asked to witness the event. At about two o'clock the contestants entered the lists, George mounted on his



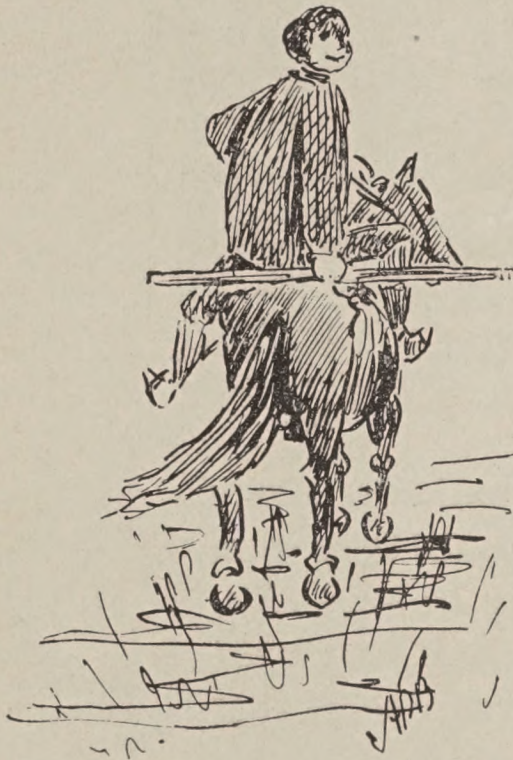
black charger, the old mare, who hadn't been outside of the pasture for nearly a year, and Henry seated on his palfrey, which looked something like a mule. They were each armed with clothes-poles for lances, and were greeted with cheers from all sides as they took their places in the lists. Now the rule



of the match was that they shouldn't strike straight forward, but should wait until they were passing each other and then swing around sideways and strike on the back. The first onslaught was attended with very little damage, except that George swung around too hard, and missing his mark, fell off the horse onto his head. But this did not make much difference, and they were soon facing each other once more. This time George was a little more lucky and managed to get in a good lick in the small of Henry's back. At this Henry commenced to cry and said that he wouldn't play any more if George hit so hard. "All right," said George, "I know how to settle that. We won't strike at each other at all, but just hit the horses so it will look as if we were fighting." Henry agreed to this and the tourna-

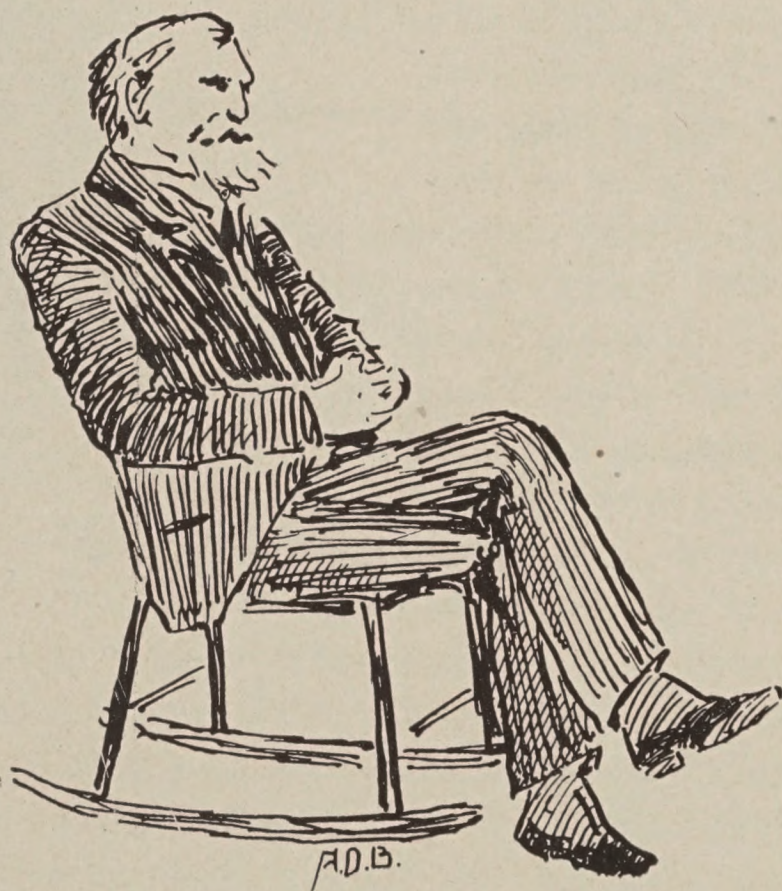
ment started again. This time Henry was the aggressor, and as he was going past on the fly he brought his pole around and hit the old mare a good one on the back. Now, as she had not

been let into the secret, she naturally objected to this treatment, and signified her disapproval by kicking up her heels and starting off like the wind for the barn.

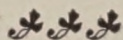


George hung gallantly to the reins, gently remonstrating with her. "Whoa, Mag! Whoa, old girl!" But she wouldn't "whoa" worth a cent, and finally George was forced to pull her into a clump of bushes to prevent his being knocked off when she turned

in at the gate. This stopped her running, but she immediately commenced to kick and buck like all possessed, and very soon George found himself perched up in a tree near by. The mare, after having rid herself of her troublesome burden, uttered a joyful neigh and trotted off to the barn, leaving George to disengage himself from the encircling boughs and to seek "terra firma" as best he could. Needless to say the great tournament had to be abandoned and the boys were forced to find some other mode of amusing themselves.



A Christmas Ghost Story.



IT was Christmas eve and, dinner being over, the family had assembled in the drawing room. Suddenly, during a lull in the conversation, someone suggested that Grandfather should tell a story.

“Oh, yes!” cried out a young member of the household, “tell us about something that happened while you were in the army.”

The old man thus appealed to, smiled and said, “Very well. I will tell you about a strange thing that happened to me during the late war. But it is a ghost story, and perhaps you younger ones may not wish to hear it.” Cries of “Yes, yes!” “Do tell it!” followed this speech, and the old soldier, well pleased with the good start his story had received, cleared his throat and began :

“It was just thirty years ago to-night that I was doing picket duty. The army was encamped about five miles from the little town of ———, near Richmond. The following day being Christmas, we soldiers had prepared for a fine time, and so it was with a light heart that I was treading the snow on my beat that night. I was to be relieved at twelve, and it was already half-past eleven. In passing over a small hill I could not help but admire the view that was thus given me. It was a perfect night and the full moon was shining with dazzling brightness on the fields white with snow. To my right, and far away behind me stretched the James, while directly in front of me lay the little town of ———, wrapped in solemn stillness.

“But as I stood thus gazing about me, my attention was attracted by the figure of a man which emerged from a dark clump of bushes near by, and approached me. As he stepped out into the moonlight I saw by his uniform that he was a rebel, and in an instant I had dropped on one knee behind a bush, while my gun flew to my shoulder. But when I should have pulled the trigger, some unseen power seemed to stay my hand, and I could not bring myself to send the bullet on its fatal mission.

“Still the man came nearer and nearer, looking neither to the right nor the left. He passed

within a few feet of where I knelt, paralyzed by an unknown terror, and I had a good view of him. A bony right hand clutched a rusty musket, while his face, which was so thin that it could more readily be imagined to be that of a grinning skull than of a living being, was of such a ghastly whiteness that I instinctively recoiled. His small eyes, deeply sunk in their hollow sockets, seemed to glow with an unnatural light. His clothes, old and tattered, hung in rags about him and had evidently been exposed to all sorts of weather.

“His long, noiseless stride soon carried him into the woods and out of my sight. As I stood gazing after him, many confused thoughts came to my mind. Who could this strange rebel be? Who was this prowling around so near our forces? A spy! And I had allowed him to go unmolested! I stood for a few minutes dumb-founded at the enormity of the mistake I had made, and was just about to plunge into the woods in search of him, when I seemed to see a faint glow way off in the forest. I watched it and perceived that it was approaching me, and as it emerged into a moonlit space, I observed that it was the same rebel returning.

“The unnatural and ghostly light that thus hovered around him so unnerved me that for a second time I allowed him to pass unharmed,

and enter the same dark clump of bushes from which I had first seen him emerge.

“So he was in truth a rebel spy who, having entered our lines and having learned what he wished, had returned to his own ranks. Having fully convinced myself that this was so, and cursing myself for my imprudence, I turned and started to descend the hill. I was about half way down, when, happening to cast a furtive glance at that dark clump of bushes, I was surprised to see that rebel come forth from it and pursue his same methodical march. By this I



perceived that my supposition that he was a spy was incorrect, and that he was nothing but a rebel sentry upon his beat. But although I was somewhat relieved at the thought that I had committed no crime in letting him pass, I still thought it my duty to waylay him and kill him on his return.

“I accordingly set out for the bushes where he had each time come from and looked about for his footprints in the snow, in order that I might station myself at the best possible point. But to my amazement I could not discover a single footprint, although I had distinctly seen him march over that very ground three times! Who, then, was this mysterious being who could

walk upon snow three inches deep and not leave a single footprint? As I stood facing the bush and pondering over this last phenomenon, my blood was frozen in my veins by the sight of that same ghostly figure passing not two feet from where I was standing, and entering the bushes in front of me. He disappeared in the thicket, and at the same time I heard a clock in the village strike twelve, the hour of my relief.

“As the last stroke was borne to me on the night air, a rifle-shot rang out from the thicket into which the sentry had just advanced, and echoing it a shriek of the most uncanny weirdness. I stood for a few moments bewildered and startled, and then springing forward began to tear away the branches which intervened between me and the spot from which that unearthly scream had come. At last I forced my way into the very midst of the thicket, and there stretched out upon the ground and half covered by the snow, lay the skeleton of a rebel sentry. A bullet hole in the skull, which I immediately recognized as that of the rebel who but a few moments before I had seen enter the thicket, told the cause of his death. So my midnight tormentor had been the ghost of a rebel sentry who, having been murdered upon his beat, came forth and renewed his march

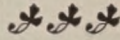


every night until the striking of twelve called him to die again. I returned to camp, and until this day have never mentioned the occurrence to any one."

For a moment after the old man ceased talking there was a lull, after which the older ones, having exchanged many sly winks, gravely hinted that Grandfather's abilities as a storyteller were certainly amazing, although the children immediately voted it a capital story.

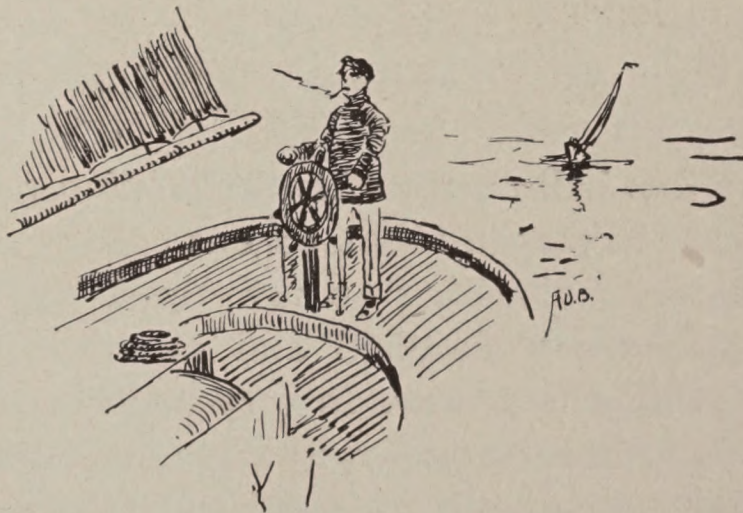


Jones's Adventure with a Whale.



YES, sir," said Jones the other evening as the Club was assembled in its rooms after a supper at Dels, "this talk you fellows have started about the 'Descent of Man,' reminds me of one of the strangest events that has ever befallen me."

As Jones's stories were famous for their exciting and interesting nature, as well as for their *vivacity*, the room immediately became quiet, and the "Descent of Man" was forced to take a back seat until the adventure had been related.



"It happened this way," he began, carefully

lighting another cigar. "Shortly after my graduation from college, being of an adventurous spirit, I embarked upon a whaler as a deck-hand, partly from my love of adventure, but chiefly to procure a little material for a story I had in mind. The story was never written, but I got enough experience from that one trip to last me the rest of my life.

"After reaching the whaling grounds, we cruised around for a couple of months with very poor luck. As we had only caught three whales during all the while we had been out, you can easily see that the time naturally hung very heavily on our hands. To pass away this time, and also to get a little exercise, we fellows used



to play foot-ball on the after-deck. You remember I used to play full-back on our college eleven and, before embarking on my trip, I had carelessly thrown a foot-ball and pump into my trunk. This ball came in very handy now and we used to have some exciting games on board, although we couldn't do much punting for fear of kicking the ball into the sea. It was in the

middle of one of these games, and just after I had made a beautiful end run for twenty-five yards, that the lookout aroused us all with the cry of "There she blows!" Hastily kicking the foot-ball down the hatchway and sticking the pump into my pocket, I climbed over the side of the ship into a boat that had already been let down. We were soon pulling towards the whale, which was sporting around in the water some quarter of a mile from us. It did not take us very long to come within range, and then the man in the bow let fly the harpoon. The thing didn't hit him square, but, striking too high up, it glanced off and flew away into the water. It must have scratched him pretty badly, though, for he immediately wheeled around and set sail for us at the rate of about forty knots an hour. He came so suddenly that we didn't have time to get out of his way, and with one blow of his mighty tail he broke the boat to pieces and sent us all flying into the air.

"I was here endeavoring to ascertain by calculus, a study over which I had spent many hours while at college, how long it would be before I struck the water, reckoning the rate at which I started as a mile a minute. But I was interrupted in this problem by alighting, not in the water, but upon the back of the whale, who, I felt sure by his motions, was making preparations to dive. As I was the best diver in college,

I felt reasonably sure that I could stay under water as long as his oceanic majesty, and so taking a long breath and renewing the grip I had taken on his back-bone, I gave him to understand that I was ready as soon as he was. He must have comprehended me, for he immediately went under water, where he remained only about a half an hour.

“During this short interval that we spent under water a happy thought struck me, and taking out my knife I whittled a little hole in his side and fitted into it the nozzle of the football pump, which I had stuck into my pocket before leaving the ship. Then I waited patiently until he should again emerge into the atmosphere. He soon came up to get another breath



and I commenced to pump for dear life. He didn't go down so far the next time he dove and only staid under about fifteen min-

utes. When he came up I renewed my pumping tactics, and by so doing I had him in a little while so full of air that he couldn't dive a foot. Then carefully plugging up the hole, I arose to take a look at the scenery. I noticed as I regained my feet that the whale's back had swelled out to about twice the size it was when I first came aboard him, presumably from the quantity of air I had pumped into him. I also noticed that he

was making wonderful time, through, or rather over, the water, and then another bright idea struck me. I had quite a quantity of cord in my pocket, and with this I quickly rigged up a halter and pair of reins and, taking out my pocket compass, steered him, as nearly as I could judge, for New York.

“The whale kept up his wonderful speed the rest of that day, all through the night, and early the next morning, as I arose after a very refreshing sleep, I was greatly gratified to see a long blue line at the horizon on my left, which I immediately recognized, even at that distance, as being a part of the northern shore of the United States. Toward noon the whale began to get rather tired and slackened down a bit, but, as I was particularly desirous to reach New York in time for supper, for I had eaten nothing since that morning on ship-board, I effectually stirred him up by dancing a double shuffle on his fourth lumbar vertebra, a place I discovered through reading Gibbon’s history as being the most sensitive part of all sea animals.

“About three in the afternoon I sighted New York, and then, running up a small American

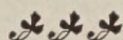


flag that I had in my pocket to his starboard fin, I steamed up the harbor with all the majesty of a man-of-war. I anchored the whale in the harbor by covering up his eyes, which, you know, is the best way in the world to stop this animal, and then signaled for a boat to come to take me ashore. One was immediately launched from the dock and put out to me, by means of which I quickly reached land. On my disembarking, I was naturally deafened by questions about my curious trans-Atlantic liner, and after I had given as satisfactory an account of my adventure as was possible, the captain of a whaling vessel that had arrived that morning offered me a good sum for the whale, if I was through with it. I quickly accepted his offer and he dispatched a boat to kill the whale and bring it ashore. When quite close to the animal, one of the men fired a rifle at it in order to kill it. This produced the same effect as the sticking of a pin into a toy balloon would. There was an explosion that could be heard for miles, the water around the animal was thrown to a height of a hundred and fifty feet, and whale and boat vanished into space. The only remnant of the whale that was ever found was a small piece of the hole which I had bored in his side in which to insert the pump, and this was picked up three miles in shore."

Here Jones stopped, and the company of one accord sorrowfully arose, and putting on their hats and coats, left him to finish his cigar alone.



Deductions à la Sherlock Holmes.



HE had just been reading Sherlock Holmes and was completely in love with the detective. Holmes was his idol, beside whom other great men were pygmies. He imitated the actions of his god, tried to assume an all absorbed look, and a clear penetrating gaze. I was even prepared to hear that he had contracted the habit of using cocaine, as did Sherlock.

Knowing his peculiarity I was therefore prepared for some of his extraordinary ideas, as I met him the other morning. He came up smiling, and grasping me warmly by the hand said: "Good morning, my dear Watson—er, I should say Smith. Why weren't you down to the club last night? Missed you awfully. Jones told us a capital story. Oh, I see, went to the theatre instead, and with May, too. Say, this is too good, I must tell the boys—" Here I interrupted him by saying, "Yes, I did take her down to the theatre, but how in the world did you know? Who told you?"

"Why, my dear boy," he said, "awfully simple, don't you know. In taking out your glove just now you pulled out a theatre coupon.



There it is at your feet now ; you can easily read it,—March 14, last night, Orchestra Circle M 26. So you see that it's proved that you went last night. But then I thought, what in the world induced him to get such a good seat as that? Standing room is generally good enough for him. Then it occurred to me, why, he must have gone with some one. Of course it was a girl, because if he had gone with another fellow he would have made the other fellow buy the tickets, and then he would not have had that coupon. Therefore he took a girl, and what girl in all this world would he throw away a dollar and a half on but May? And there you are. See?"

I had to confess that he was right and pretended to be amazed at his wonderful reasoning, but *inwardly* burned to box his ears for some of the remarks he had made. He then took me in a friendly manner by the arm and we started off together. In the course of our conversation I asked him how he was getting along on his Lamé Horse Problem.

"Admirably, admirably," he said, rubbing his hands. "I've figured it all out and can lay my hand on the culprit at a moment's notice."

"Have you made much progress in your study of deduction?" I asked.

"Yes, indeed," he replied, "I'm getting along first rate."

I here noticed an acquaintance of mine whom I knew quite well coming down the street, and pointing to him I asked my friend if he could deduce anything from his appearance.

“Easily enough, my dear boy,” he said. “He is a widower, his wife having died very recently. Goes down town to business, and is an architect. He also belongs to the Elk Lodge. Rather hasty and careless, I should say, and apt to lose his temper.”

“Wonderful!” I cried. “Everything is exactly true. But how do you do it, old man? It’s truly marvelous.”

He smiled good-naturedly, at these remarks, and said, “Why, everthing is as plain as day if you only use your eyes. You see there has been a death in his family from the crepe on his hat, and it is plain that it is his wife because he has been trying to sew a button on his vest himself, and has got it too high. You perceive that he goes down town to business from the fact that the edge of his car ticket pocket is frayed a great deal. That he is an architect is plain by the mechanical drawing pen and ruler that he has in his vest pocket, and the blue prints, presumably the plans of a house, he is carrying in his hand. His watch charm shows that he belongs to the Elk Lodge. His shoes are blacked only half way around, which shows that he is hasty and careless, as does also the fact that only

one button on each glove is fastened. As you also may have noticed, one of his shoe strings was knotted while the other was in good condition. He broke this string while in a hurry, presumably losing his temper because of a knot in it or some other trivial cause."

"Everything is quite clear," I said. "And all you need is a sharp eye, eh?"

"That's all," he replied. "And now," pointing to a house, the owner of which I knew quite well, "let's see what we can deduce from the appearance of that house. Of course it is quite plain that the servant girl has just left from the fact that the small boy of the household is opening the door for a visitor, and whoever heard of a small boy doing that unless he were made to? And why should he be made to unless the servant girl had left? So, that much is plain. That fountain in his front yard shows that the proprietor is of an artistic turn of mind as well as does the house itself, for it is a beauty. His wife loves flowers as you see by that flower-bed, and



the bushes in the corner, and the potted plants in the window. He has an older son, as is shown by these cigarette stubs, a trail of which leads up to the front porch. And lastly, he is a German, from that smell of sauerkraut that comes from his kitchen."

"All true," I cried, "and well worked out. You're certainly a wonder, old man, and quite as good as the original, I should say."

A complacent grin overspread his features at this flattery, and seeing the wonder and amazement his remarkable reasoning powers had created, and desirous of another opportunity to display them, he pointed to a rather portly man who had just then come around the corner, and said, "Here comes a benevolent old man who, I

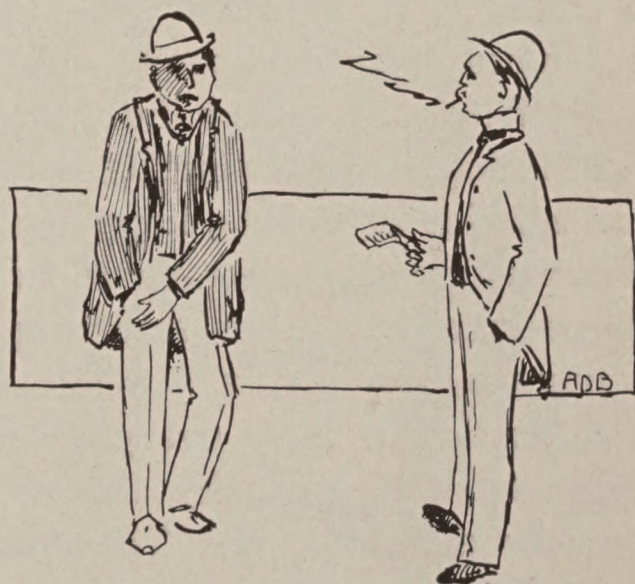
should say, is even now on some errand of kindness. He is a banker and has a home in the suburbs. He has three daughters, two sons, keeps a cow, rides a bicycle, plays the cornet, and—"



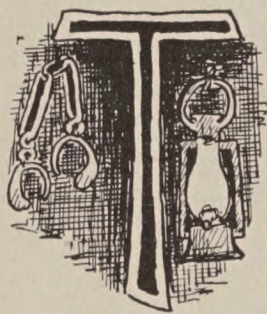
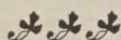
By this time the gentleman in question had come up to us, and wishing to ascertain the truth of my friend's assertion, I stopped him by politely asking the time. He accommodated me and then turning to my companion was about to

speak to him. I interrupted him, however, by asking if he were a banker, whether he lived in the country, kept a cow, rode a bicycle, played the cornet and so on. When I had finished he smiled and said, "Well, no. Not exactly. I live down town and am a collector by trade. I was just on my way to see your friend here on a little matter of business. Only a bill for a suit of clothes that has been placed in my hands by his tailor: that's all. We can fix it up in a few moments if—"

Thinking this a convenient time to depart, I sneaked around the corner, leaving my amateur detective friend to settle with the benevolent gentleman on an errand of kindness.



A Pleasant Evening and a Quiet Story.



THE last meeting of the club, before breaking up for the summer, took place last evening. Everyone was there and the time was passed very enjoyably. Jones told another story, Smith related his experience with a mad cow, and our Sherlock Holmes gave us the data he had accumulated on his latest case, which he called, "The Problem of the Bald-Headed League." Robinson also gave us a capital story of an adventure he met with while hunting in the wilds of Michigan. It ran like this :

"Last summer, in company with about a dozen other fellows, I took a hunting trip into northern Michigan, and while there an event, or rather a series of events, happened which I am safe in saying was the strangest I ever heard of. One evening we were returning to camp, and on our way ran across a small log cabin. From the outside it bore every appearance of being deserted, but curiosity led us to push aside the door and look in. The interior was as lonely and forsaken as the outside, and after a brief survey we closed the door and started



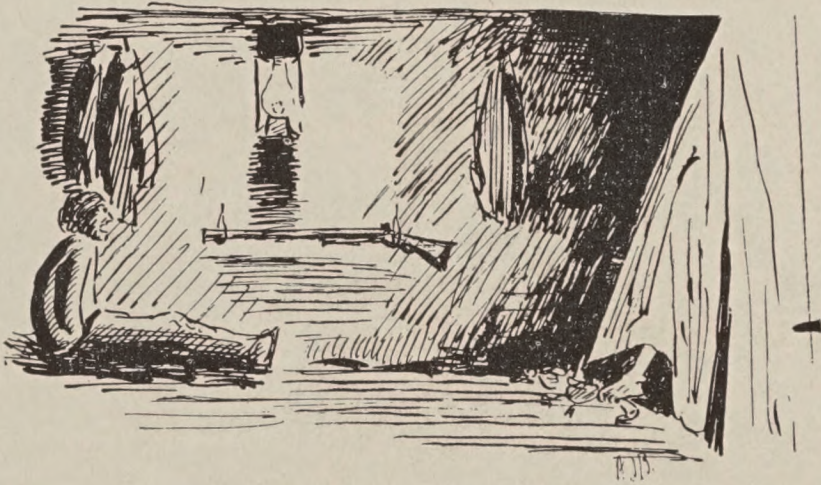
away. As I latched the door, I seemed to hear a snarl from somewhere inside, but, since no one else heard it, I decided that I must have been mistaken. More than once on our return to camp I heard twigs snap behind us, and long before we had reached there I could have sworn we were being followed. But I did not like to say anything to my companions for fear of being laughed at, so I said nothing. Before retiring that night, we hung up a large piece of venison on a tree near the camp. The next morning, being detailed for cook, I started off to obtain a



slice of it for breakfast. Imagine my surprise on reaching it to find one side chewed and torn to shreds. As it was fully six feet from the ground, I was at a loss to imagine what kind of beast had done the mischief. Of course the whole piece was spoiled and sorrowfully I went back to camp and related our loss. We break-

fasted that morning on salt pork and coffee, resolving thereafter to keep a sharp lookout for the thief.

“ Our next day’s hunting resulted in a half dozen brace of ducks. Being unwilling to allow these to hang as food for the prowler who had been around the night before, we placed them when cleaned just inside the flap of our tent. That night I was awakened by a sound outside and was just about to look out when I was paralyzed by seeing the flap of the tent pushed aside



and a *naked human foot* thrust in, the toes of which fastened around the neck of one of the ducks and slowly withdrew it. For some moments I was unable to move from sheer astonishment, and then leaping up I rushed outside. But not a soul was in sight and the camp was as still as death. I did not go back to bed, but, as it was nearly daybreak, I dressed myself and

taking my gun walked out in search of game. I had no idea of getting anything so early in the morning, and the chief reason for my going was to look around for some trace of the thief who had stolen a part of our breakfast. In my walk I happened to run across the log cabin and, just as I came in sight of it, the most unearthly screech I had ever heard came from it. I stopped and, hastily cocking my gun, stole forward to see what animal was lurking inside. I cautiously shoved open the door and looked around. But the cabin was entirely empty and everything was as I had seen it the last time. I was just leaving when I seemed to hear that same snarl, but, although I turned back immediately and scrutinized the interior even more closely than I had the time before, there was absolutely nothing in sight and I slowly turned away and started for camp.

“When I returned the rest were all up and I related to them my experience in the cabin as well as the theft of the duck; however, all the return I received for my narrative was the statement ‘that I had been dreaming.’ But I was convinced that everything was true and that night I decided to solve the problem, if possible. Accordingly I hung up a large piece of meat where the other had been and then, instead of retiring with the rest, staid up to await developments. About midnight I was aroused from

a little doze I had fallen into, by the sound of some one moving about the camp and, looking up, beheld the figure of a man standing within a few rods of me. Suddenly he espied the meat, and running over to it, he stood with his hands clasped behind his back and commenced to tear it to shreds with his teeth, eating it raw. I confess I was somewhat taken aback at this strange action and did not like to make my presence known until he had finished his feast. Then he dropped on his knees and with glaring eyes gazed about the camp. Having satisfied himself that he had been unseen, he arose and began to steal noiselessly toward the tent. All this time he had kept his hands clasped behind him, and, on reaching the tent, he slowly pushed the flap aside and thrusting in his foot drew it forth with a large loaf of bread clutched in his toes. Thinking I now had a clear case against him, I arose suddenly and, running forward with my gun to my shoulder, commanded him to stop. Seeing that he was discovered he dropped the bread, made a snap at me with his jaws, and uttering an ear-piercing shriek that aroused the camp, plunged off into the thickets, still keeping his hands behind his back. His actions so unnerved me that I was unable to get a good shot at him as he fled, and fired wildly. By this time the whole camp was awake and came tumbling out of their blankets, demanding the cause of

all this commotion. I explained as well as I could in my excited state. When dressed we all started out with lanterns for the cabin, in the direction of which the thief had run and where we were by this time determined he was staying.

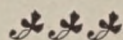
“As we came in sight of it, shriek after shriek pierced the darkness, and it was only after a long consultation that we decided to attack it. Then, ‘a line of battle having been formed,’ we slowly descended upon that little redoubt where our midnight disturber was entrenched. With guns cocked we grouped ourselves about the door and then raising a lantern slowly pushed it open. But not a soul was to be seen inside and all was as silent as the grave. We stood for some moments looking in and then were startled by that low snarl. This time I located it, and looking upward beheld a sight that chilled my blood. Right above us and clinging to the rafters with his feet, his hands still clasped behind him, crouched a ragged, hairy man. He glared down upon us with wild, bloodshot eyes and seemed a horrible sight, distorted as he was, by the feeble light of the lantern. Being discovered he leaped down and made a snap at us like a mad dog. A blow from the stock of one of our guns soon stretched him senseless on the floor. Then it was that I discovered the reason why he never used his hands. They were bound behind his back by a

part of an iron chain, so tightly indeed that they had nearly withered away. Being deprived of the use of his hands he had trained himself to use his feet with almost equal facility. This accounted for the strange appearance of that naked foot in the tent. We hastily bound him, and early that morning took him to the nearest settlement, about ten miles away, where we discovered that he was a mad man who had escaped from custody some three years before and for whom a large reward was offered. We received the reward after some little trouble and—well, I guess that's about all there is to the story," and here he stopped.

We unanimously decided that the tale, if it were true, was mighty improbable, which we didn't hesitate to tell Robinson; but on the other hand, if it were not true, it was a first rate lie.



Scraps from a Note Book.



HE belonged to that class of people who are forever trying to be funny. In fact, he liked nothing better than to be laughed at, and it pleased him to be referred to as belonging to the "smart set." But in one instance his funniness aided materially in his downfall. He was

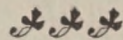


standing with his best girl one evening by a railroad crossing waiting for a train to go by. The cars had gradually slowed up, and at last when the caboose came along they were going very slowly. A bright idea suddenly struck

him. He thought he would just scare the life out of the girl and do something real smart. With the athletic grace of a cow, he swung himself upon the step of the slow moving caboose. Waving his hat in the air he cried out in a tragical voice, "Farewell, Nan, I'm off—" What he was going to say was that he was off for Kalamazoo, or some other distant clime, but he never finished it. At this moment the square-toed boot of the brakeman shot around the corner of the door—now this may seem somewhat inconsistent with the physical make-up of a human leg, but it certainly happened in this instance—and our hero found himself groveling in the ditch, while the genial brakeman sang out to him, "You can betcher life yer ded right there, pard. Yer off and 'way off."



U. S. Foot Ball Song.



Oh, once there was a foot ball team,
From C. H. S. they came,
They thought they could play foot ball,
But they didn't know the game.
They bucked against U. S. one day
And—Oh, my—what a shame,
While we go marching through High School.

CHORUS.

U. S.! U. S.! We'll sing it o'er and o'er.
U. S.! U. S.! Oh, High School don't feel sore,
You are not in the class with us,
Although you do weigh more,
While we go marching through High School.

O, watch young Burke go 'round the end,
And Roby buck the line,
And Mack go through the center,
You can bet it's something fine.
We'll show you how the game is played,
And make you yell for time,
While we go marching through High School.

CHORUS.—U. S.! U. S.! Etc.

O, yes, and there is Ammon, too,
And Cross on t'other end,
And Sullivan at quarter,
He's the finest in the land,
And Striebenger and Little too,
They're all just made of sand,
While we go marching through High School.

CHORUS.—U. S.! U. S.! Etc.

When Alexander strikes the line
You'll see it melt away,
He knows more in a minute
Than you flats do in a day;
And Deming, Perkins, Moxham,
They'll show you how to play,
While we go marching through High School.

CHORUS.—U. S.! U. S.! Etc.



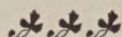
THERE are some souls whose magnanimity and generosity seem so overwhelmingly great that they appear too ethereally good for this mundane sphere. Such a one recently

boarded a Euclid avenue car at the square. As she reached the second step the car started with a jerk, and had it not been for the conductor's timely assistance she would have been thrown into the gutter. Such kindness, she thought, ought not to be allowed to pass unrewarded. When the conductor came around for her fare, she extracted what she thought was a dime from her purse and handed it to him. "Never mind the change," she said, with a benignant smile. The conductor looked

at the silver piece long and silently. Then he sorrowfully handed it back to her. It was a three-cent piece.



The Trials of Greatness.



ALGERNON de Softhedd was leaning back upon a divan in his richly furnished studio. Since the publication of his book, "The Influence of the Mind Over Thought," he had been wined, dined and receptioned until life had become quite a bore. His book had been favorably reviewed by the critics, and people began to speak of him as the "Napoleon of Literature." In fact he had become quite a lion, and the world was impatiently waiting for his next production. He felt that he owed it to the world to write another book, and was deep in the puzzling question of what next to turn to in literature, when his *valet de chambre* entered, and announced that Mr. Paddard, of the *Daily Hoodwink*, was below and requested an interview. With a sigh of resignation Algy bade the valet show him up, and settled himself among the pillows preparatory to undergoing the ordeal. Soon the door was opened and Mr. Paddard introduced. With the inherent ease of his kind he deposited his hat on a statue of Minerva, and took the chair Algy offered. He drew out note book and pencil, then crossing

his legs, said, "I came to ask you a few things about your book, 'The Influence of the Mind Over Thought.' "



"Yes," said Algy, wearily.

"In the first place," began the reporter, "Has insanity been present in your family to any alarming extent?"

The intimation implied in this question was too much for the young author, so he refused an answer, said it was getting late, and wished the reporter good day,—and in Halifax.

The reporter went, and the *Daily Hoodwink* appeared as usual the next morning ; but with a three-column " roast " for our hero.

But hardly had the pusher of the pencil taken his leave, than the valet returned, this time with a pile of invitations which the postman had just left. Now if there was anything Algy detested it was an invitation to a reception. Invitations of a different nature he treated in a different light, if someone else would be kind enough to do the treating. He slowly arose with a look of inexpressible disgust upon his fair countenance, and going to his writing desk drew forth a handful of engraved regrets. Signing the names of the parties in the spaces left for them he sealed and addressed the envelopes, and once more returned to the divan.



But rest is as unobtainable to the great as it is to a dog with a tin can tied to his tail. Once more the valet disturbed him, this time to announce Miss —, on the " Subscription List for Poor Authors." "Alas," thought Algy, "Why did I write that book?"

Miss — was admitted, and Algy having generously gone down into his pocket for a

dollar and a quarter, she departed all smiles and grimaces.

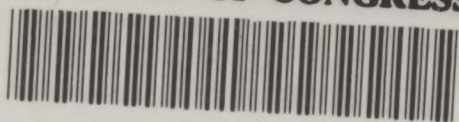
The hardest trial was, however, yet to come. He had hardly been alone five minutes when his valet once more aroused him. By this time he was pretty well *riled*. "Well, confound it all, what is it this time?" he cried impatiently.



"What with your reporters, and your invitations and your requests for aid in this direction or in that I'm heartily sick of being a successful writer. Come; out with it. Who is it now?"

"Poor Mr. Scribbler is below," said the valet, with never a grin, "And he wants to know if you can spare him the ten dollars for those six chapters on "'The Influence of the Mind Over Thought?'"

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